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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/677,290	10/03/2003	Kenchi Ito	HITA.0442	9634

38327 7590 08/26/2004

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EXAMINER

MILLER, BRIAN E

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2652

DATE MAILED: 08/26/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/677,290

Applicant(s)

ITO ET AL.

Examiner

Brian E. Miller

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/911,541.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 10/03/03.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: ____.

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This application is a CON of 09/911,541 and claims 1-14 are now pending.

Claim Objections

1. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 14 are objected to because of the following informalities:
 - (a) Claim 1, line 7, the word "firm" should be changed to "film";
 - (b) claim 3 (and similarly for claims 8 & 14) the word "harf" should be changed to "half";
 - (c) claim 4, "1st" and "2nd" should be changed to "first" and "second", respectively;
 - (d) claim 10, the phrase "wherein a spin polarized tunnel electrons are" is grammatically awkward. Appropriate correction is required.

Double Patenting

2. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

3. Claims 1-14 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-22 of U.S. Patent No. 6,657,830. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other.

The common subject matter includes: A magnetic sensor, comprising a soft magnetic layer; a ferromagnetic layer; a non-magnetic layer interposed between the soft magnetic layer and the

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ferromagnetic layer such that the magnetization of said ferromagnetic layer is fixed with respect to a magnetic field to be detected; wherein the magnetoresistance of the magnetoresistive film changes upon application of a detecting current across said soft magnetic layer and said ferromagnetic layer through said non-magnetic layer, with a peak of the absolute value of the ratio of change in magnetoresistance of said magnetoresistive film being greater than 20% and occurring at a temperature in the range from 0 degrees C to 60 degrees C and with a bias voltage applied across said ferromagnetic layer and said soft magnetic layer being in ranges of +0.2 to +0.8 V and -0.8 to -0.2 V.

While the present application does not recite changing the relative angle with magnetization of the ferromagnetic layer, however, this functional language does not constitute patentable subject matter as rotation of the magnetization of the soft magnetic free layer is a basic concept in MR technology and would be at least inherent to the now claimed invention.

It is further noted that, although specific materials are not recited in the pending claims, applicant would be limited to those disclosed in the present application which would encompass the recited characteristics as set forth in the specification and would necessarily include the materials recited in the '830 dependent claims.

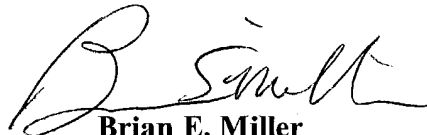
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian E. Miller whose telephone number is (703) 308-2850. The examiner can normally be reached on M-TH 7:15am-4:45pm (and every other friday).

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hoa T. Nguyen can be reached on (703) 305-9687. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Brian E. Miller
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2652

BEM
August 23, 2004